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EXAMINER

FISCHER, ANDREW J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 12/20/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/714,774

Applicant(s)

KERKER ET AL.

Examiner

Andrew J. Fischer

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 December 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 and 51-91 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 and 51-91 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgements

1. Applicants' amendment filed December 2, 2004 is acknowledged. Accordingly, claims 1-41 and 51-91 remain pending.
2. Because Applicants did not receive an art rejection in accordance MPEP §2173.06, the finality of the previous Office Action (the Second Final Office Action mailed November 8, 2004) is hereby withdrawn. However, because of Applicants' amendment filed July 19, 2004, this Office Action is now final. See "Conclusion" section *infra*.
3. All references in this Office Action to the capitalized versions of "Applicants" refers specifically the Applicants of record. References to lower case versions of "applicant" or "applicants" refers to any or all patent "applicants." Unless expressly noted otherwise, references to "Examiner" in this Office Action refers specifically to the Examiner of record while reference to or use of the lower case version of "examiner" refers to examiner(s) generally.
4. This application in an image file wrapper ("IFW") application. Applicants' response is therefore broken down before being placed into the IFW system (*i.e.* claims, remarks, drawings, etc. are separated and independently scanned). To ensure proper handling by the Examiner, the Examiner highly recommends Applicants place the application serial no (*e.g.* 06/123,456) in a header or footer (or other appropriate area) of *each* page submitted. At the very least, the Examiner highly recommends this practice for all pages listing the claims.
5. This Office Action is written in OACS. Because of this, the Examiner is unable to control formatting, paragraph numbering, font, spelling, line spacing, and/or other word processing issues. The Examiner sincerely apologizes for these errors.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §112 2nd Paragraph

6. The following is a quotation of the 2nd paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention.

a. In claim 1, it is unclear if the “first suggested order” comprises only “a first two or more suggested products or services.” As currently claimed, a “first suggested recurrence” modifies “receiving.” Appropriate correction is required.

8. The Examiner finds that because the claims are indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112 2nd paragraph, it is impossible to properly construe claim scope at this time. See *Honeywell International Inc. v. ITC*, 68 USPQ2d 1023, 1030 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (“Because the claims are indefinite, the claims, by definition, cannot be construed.”). However, in accordance with MPEP §2173.06 and the USPTO’s policy of trying to advance prosecution by providing art rejections even though these claim are indefinite, the claims are construed and the art is applied *as much as practically possible*.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. §102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office Action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States. . . .

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(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

10. Claims 1-41 and 51-91 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Cockrill et. al. (U.S. 2002/0059114 A1) ("Cockrill"). Cockrill discloses *e.g.* the claimed invention including a first request for a suggested order; generating a first profile (the price and description of the product); and causing the first suggested order to automatically reoccur (*i.e.* a subscription service).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

11. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office Action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

12. Claims 1-41 and 51-91 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cockrill.¹ It is the Examiner's principle position that the claims are anticipated because of the inerencies in Cockrill.

However if not inherent, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cockrill and include the claimed functional limitations. Such a modification would have allowed users to change their subscription.

¹ See MPEP §2112 expressly authorizing alternative §102/§103 rejections when the question of inherency is present in the anticipation rejection.

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13. In reference to electronic commerce systems, it is the Examiner's factual determination that web based electronic commerce systems are old and well known in the art. Evidence to support this finding includes *e.g.* Chen et. al. (U.S. 5,590,197A)("Chen") and Wong (U.S. 6,115,690 A).

14. Additionally, if the server structure was not inherent, it too would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cockrill to include the claimed server structure. It is the Examiner's position that absent evidence of new or unexpected results, it is not inventive in terms of patentability to take one or more servers ($S_1, S_2, S_3, \dots S_N$) which perform one or more tasks ($T_1, T_2, T_3, \dots T_N$) and add (or subtract) an additional number of servers (X) to perform all or part of the same tasks by allocating the tasks between the various servers (*i.e.* S_1 and S_{N+1} perform T_1 ; S_2 and S_{N+2} perform T_2 ; S_3 and S_{N+3} perform T_3 ; ... while S_N and S_{N+X} perform T_N). The prior art is replete with examples showing why such scaling (both increasing and decreasing the number of servers) is desirable.²

² See *e.g.* Watson (U.S. 6,223,209 B1) disclosing distributed satellite world wide web servers containing identical information placed strategically throughout the Internet so as to be close to all potential clients to help reduce traffic bottlenecks; Midgely et. al. (U.S. 5,592,611 A) disclosing additional servers as a stand-in for a failed server so that client service requests are transparent to the user; Kriegsman (U.S. 6,370,580 B2) disclosing multiple servers as secondary web servers to optimize file transfers; Burns et. al. (U.S. 6,298,373 B1) disclosing cache servers which download content during off-peak hours to reduce traffic bottlenecks; Stiles (U.S. 6,219,692 B1) which discloses sending essentially identical tasks to multiple servers with differing processing loads to find the most preferred server provider; Zdepski et. al. (U.S. 5,825,884) disclosing an transactional server for TV networks; *How Networks Work*, Chapter 17 describing how server based structures benefit from economies of scale in addition to offering security, excellent data management, fast response, and room for expansion; and *How the Internet Works*, Chapter 44 implementing a server based architecture in Internet e-commerce.

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15. In other words, a modification increasing the number of servers (*e.g.* having two servers perform a task previously performed by one server) is analogous to making functions, structures, or actions separable. It is the Examiner's position that when the difference between the claimed invention and the prior art is that the prior art does not disclosed an element as separable, as a matter of law, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to make the element separable. See MPEP §2144.04 V. C. and *In re Dulberg*, 289 F.2d 522, 523, 129 USPQ 348, 349 (CCPA 1961). As noted above, it is desirable to allocate the server tasks to various servers to help reduce bandwidth bottlenecks and to help increase the benefits from economies of scale in addition to offering increased security, excellent data management, fast response, and room for expansion.

16. After careful review of the entire record, the Examiner finds that Applicants have not asserted any new or unexpected results regarding their hardware configuration (and the software running their hardware configuration) of their server system. Absent such new or unexpected results, such modifications either increasing or decreasing the number of servers or computers or even reassigning tasks to different server(s) or computers would have helped maintain benefits from economies of scale in addition to offering increased security, excellent data management, fast response, and room for expansion while reducing both operating and capital costs.

17. Moreover, it is old and well known in the art that storage mediums are configured as databases. See *e.g.* Wolfe et. al. (U.S. 6,282,517 B1)("Wolfe"). In an alternative embodiment in Wolf, the Data Center storage medium 106 may be configured as a database from which information can be both stored, updated, and retrieved. For example, the database may conform to the SQL standard. In another alternative embodiment, the database

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may conform to any database standard, or may even conform to a non-standard, private specification. The Data Center programs may provide access to the information stored on the Data Center storage medium 106. The Data Center storage medium 106 may be accessed by devices such as clients, servers, workstations, personal computers, and the like, connected to the network 102 or the LAN 108. Wolfe, column 6, ~ lines 43-54.

18. After careful review of the specification and prosecution history, the Examiner is unaware of any desire—either expressly or implicitly—by Applicants to be their own lexicographer and to define a claim term to have a meaning other than its ordinary and accustomed meaning. Therefore, the Examiner starts with the heavy presumption that all claim limitations are given their ordinary and accustomed meaning. See *Bell Atlantic Network Services Inc. v. Covad Communications Group Inc.*, 262 F.3d 1258, 1268, 59 USPQ2d 1865, 1870 (Fed. Cir. 2001) (“[T]here is a heavy presumption in favor of the ordinary meaning of claim language as understood by one of ordinary skill in the art.”); *CCS Fitness Inc. v. Brunswick Corp.*, 288 F.3d 1359, 1366, 62 USPQ2d 1658, 1662 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (There is a “heavy presumption that a claim term carries its ordinary and customary meaning.”). See also MPEP §2111.01 and *In re Zletz*, 893 F.2d 319, 321, 13 USPQ2d 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989).³

In accordance with the ordinary and accustomed meaning presumption, during examination the claims are interpreted with their “broadest reasonable interpretation . . .” *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1997). See also MPEP §2111.

³ It is the Examiner’s position that “plain meaning” and “ordinary and accustomed meaning” are synonymous. See e.g. *Rexnord Corp. v. Laitram Corp.*, 274 F.3d 1336, 1342,

However, if Applicants disagree with the Examiner and have either (a) already used lexicography or (b) wish to use lexicography and therefore (under either (a) or (b)) desire a claim limitation to have a meaning other than its ordinary and accustomed meaning, the Examiner respectfully requests Applicants in their next response to expressly indicate⁴ the claim limitation at issue and to show where in the specification or prosecution history the limitation is defined. Such definitions must be clearly stated in the specification or file history. *Bell Atlantic*, 262 F.3d at 1268, 59 USPQ2d at 1870, (“[I]n redefining the meaning of particular claim terms away from the ordinary meaning, the intrinsic evidence must ‘clearly set forth’ or ‘clearly redefine’ a claim term so as to put one reasonably skilled in the art on notice that the patentee intended to so redefine the claim term”).⁵ The Examiner cautions that no new matter is allowed.

60 USPQ2d 1851, 1854 (Fed. Cir. 2001) (“[A]ll terms in a patent claim are to be given their plain, ordinary and accustomed meaning . . .”).

⁴ “Absent an *express intent* to impart a novel meaning, terms in a claim are to be given their ordinary and accustomed meaning. [Emphasis added.]” *Wenger Manufacturing Inc. v. Coating Mach. Sys., Inc.*, 239 F.3d 1225, 1232, 57 USPQ2d 1679, 1684 (Fed. Cir. 2001) (citations and quotations omitted). “In the absence of an *express intent* to impart a novel meaning to claim terms, an inventor’s claim terms take on their ordinary meaning. We indulge a heavy presumption that a claim term carries its ordinary and customary meaning. [Emphasis added.]” *Teleflex Inc. v. Ficosa North America Corp.*, 299 F.3d 1313, 1325, 63 USPQ2d 1374, 1380 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (citations and quotations omitted).

⁵ See also *Vitronics Corp. v. Conceptronic, Inc.*, 90 F.3d 1576, 1582, 39 USPQ2d 1573, 1576 (Fed. Cir. 1996), (“[A] patentee may choose to be his own lexicographer and use terms in a manner other than their ordinary meaning, *as long as* the special definition of the term is *clearly stated* in the patent specification or file history. [Emphasis added.]”); *Multiform Desiccants Inc. v. Medzam Ltd.*, 133 F.3d 1473, 1477, 45 USPQ2d 1429, 1432 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (“Such special meaning, however, must be sufficiently clear in the specification that any departure from common usage would be so understood by a person of experience in the field of the invention.”). See also MPEP §2111.01, subsection titled “Applicant May Be Own Lexicographer” and MPEP §2173.05(a) titled “New Terminology.”

Applicants are reminded that failure by Applicants in their next response to properly traverse this issue in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) or to be non-responsive to this issue entirely will be considered a desire by Applicants to forgo lexicography in this application and to continue having the claims interpreted with their broadest reasonable interpretation.⁶ Additionally, it is the Examiner's position that the above requirements are reasonable.⁷ Unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner, the preceding discussion on claim interpretation principles applies to all examined claims currently pending.

19. To the extent that the Examiner's interpretations are in dispute with Applicants' interpretations, the Examiner hereby adopts the following definitions—under the broadest reasonable interpretation standard—in all his claim interpretations.⁸ Moreover, while the following list is provided in accordance with *In re Morris*, the definitions are a guide to claim terminology since claim terms must be interpreted in context of the surrounding claim language.⁹ Finally, the following list is not intended to be exhaustive in any way:

⁶ See 37 C.F.R. §1.104(c)(3) which states in part: “the examiner may rely upon admissions by applicant . . . as to *any matter* affecting patentability [Emphasis added.]”

⁷ The Examiner's requirements on this matter are reasonable on at least two separate and independent grounds. First, the Examiner's requirements are simply an express request for clarification of how Applicants intend their claims to be interpreted so that lexicography (or even an *attempt* at lexicography) by Applicants is not inadvertently overlooked by the Examiner. Second, the requirements are reasonable in view of the USPTO's goals of compact prosecution, productivity with particular emphasis on reductions in both pendency and cycle time, and other goals as outlined in the USPTO's The 21st Century Strategic Plan, February 3, 2003 available at www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/strat21/index.htm (last accessed December 14, 2004).

⁸ While most definitions are cited because these terms are found in the claims, the Examiner may have provided additional definition(s) to help interpret words, phrases, or concepts found in the definitions themselves or in the prior art.

⁹ See e.g. *Brookhill-Wilk I LLC v. Intuitive Surgical Inc.*, 334 F.3d 1294, 1300, 67 USPQ2d 1132, 1137 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (abstract dictionary definitions are not alone determinative; “resort must always be made to the surrounding text of the claims in question”).

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Server: “2. On the Internet or other network, a computer or program that responds to commands from a client.” Computer Dictionary, 3rd Edition, Microsoft Press, Redmond, WA, 1997.¹⁰ **Client:** “3. On a local area network or Internet, a computer that accesses shared network resources provided by another computer (called a server).” Id. **Computer:** “Any machine that does three things: accepts structured input, processes it according to prescribed rules, and produces the results as output.” Id.

Electronic Commerce: “Commercial activity that takes place by means of connected computers. Electronic commerce can occur between a user and a vendor through an online information service, the Internet, or a BBS, or between a vendor and customer computers through electronic data interchange.” Id.

Internet “The worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the TCP/IP suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, government, educational, and other computer systems, that route data and messages.” Id.

Network “A group of computers and associated network devices that are connected by communications facilities.” Id.

¹⁰ Based upon Applicants’ disclosure, the art of record, and the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in this art as determined by the factors discussed in MPEP §2141.03 (where practical), the Examiner finds that the *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary* is an appropriate technical dictionary known to be used by one of ordinary skill in this art. See *e.g. Altiris Inc. v. Symantec Corp.*, 318 F.3d 1363, 1373, 65 USPQ2d 1865, 1872 (Fed. Cir. 2003) where the Federal Circuit used the *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary* (3d ed.) as “a technical dictionary” to define the term “flag.” See also *In re Barr*, 444 F.2d 588, 170 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1971)(noting that its appropriate to use technical dictionaries in order to ascertain the meaning of a term of art) and MPEP §2173.05(a) titled ‘New Terminology.’

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Associate: “1: closely connected with one another . . .” Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition, Merriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, M.A., 1997.

Automatic “1 a : largely or wholly involuntary;” Id.

Corresponding “1 . . . b : RELATED, ACCOMPANYING” Id.

For “1 a — used as a function word to indicate purpose <a grant ~ studying medicine>” Id.

Information “2 a . . . (3): FACTS, DATA . . .” Id.

Manage “1 : to handle or direct with a degree of skill . . . 1 a : to direct or carry on business or affairs;” Id.

Product “2 a : something produced” Id.

20. Because applicants frequently misunderstand the historical order of definitions and their corresponding senses, the following excerpts from the “Explanatory Notes” in Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary are provided:

Definitions

Division of Senses

A boldface colon is used in this dictionary to introduce a definition. . . . It is also used to separate two or more definitions of a single sense. . . . Boldface Arabic numerals separate senses of a word that has more than one sense. . . . Boldface lowercase letters separate the subsenses of a word. . . . Lightface numerals in parentheses indicate a further division of senses. . . .

Order of Senses

The order of senses within an entry is historical: the sense known to have been first used in English is entered first. This is not to be taken to mean, however, that each sense of a multisense word developed from the immediately preceding sense. It is altogether possible that sense 1 of a word has given rise to sense 2 and sense 2 to sense 3, but frequently sense 2 and sense 3 may have risen independently of one another from sense 1.

When a number sense is further subdivided into lettered subsenses, the include of particular subsenses with a sense is based upon their semantic relationship to one another, but their order is likewise historical: subsense 1a is earlier than subsense 1b, 1b is earlier than 1c, and so forth. Divisions of subsenses indicated by lightface numerals in parentheses are also in historical

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order with respect to one another. Subsenses may be out of historical order, however, with respect to the broader numbered senses. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, pp 19a-20a.

21. Functional recitation(s) using the word “for” or other functional terms (*e.g.* “for facilitating electronic commerce through a network” as recited in claim 1) have been considered but given less patentable weight¹¹ because they fail to add any steps and are thereby regarded as intended use language. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in additional steps. See *Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. v. Ben Venue Laboratories, Inc.*, 246 F.3d 1368, 1375-76, 58 USPQ2d 1508, 1513 (Fed. Cir. 2001) (Where the language in a method claim states only a purpose and intended result, the expression does not result in a manipulative difference in the steps of the claim.).

22. Moreover, with respect to conditional language such as “may be different” as recited in claim 1, Applicants are reminded that “[l]anguage that suggest or makes optional but does not require steps to be performed or does not limit a claim to a particular structure does not limit the scope of a claim or claim limitation. [Emphasis in original.]” MPEP §2106 II C.

23. Additionally, the Examiner notes that “the PTO and the CCPA acknowledged product-by-process claims as an exception to the general rule requiring claims to define products in terms of structural characteristics.” *Atlantic Thermoplastics Co. v. Faytex Corp.*, 970 F.2d 834, 845, 23 USPQ2d 1481, 1490 (Fed. Cir. 1992) (hereinafter “*Atlantic Thermoplastics v. Faytex I*”). Furthermore, the Federal Circuit “acknowledges that it has in effect recognized . . . product-by-process claims as exceptional.” *Atlantic Thermoplastics v. Faytex I*, 970 F.2d at 847, 23 USPQ2d at 1491.

¹¹ See *e.g. In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983)(stating that although all limitations must be considered, not all limitations are entitled to patentable weight).

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Because of this exceptional status, the Examiner has carefully reviewed the claims and it is the Examiner's position that claims 1-41 and 51-91 *do not* contain any product-by-process limitations whether in a conventional format or otherwise. If Applicants disagree with the Examiner, the Examiner respectfully requests Applicant(s) in their next response to expressly point out any product-by-process claim(s) and their limitations so that they may be afforded their exceptional status and treated accordingly. Applicants are reminded that "even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself." *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 697, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (citations omitted).¹² Failure by Applicants in their next response to also address this issue in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) or to be non-responsive to this issue entirely will be considered intent by Applicant(s) *not* to recite any product-by-process limitations. Unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner, the preceding discussion on product-by-process principles applies to all examined claims currently pending.

Response to Arguments

24. Applicants' arguments filed December 2, 2004 and July 19, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

25. Applicants argue that "Slotznick fails to disclose that the intelligent agent stores a single profile of multiple products to be ordered on a recurring basis wherein each of the

¹² See also MPEP §2113.

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products is capable of being reordered according to a different recurring basis as claimed in Applicants' claims."¹³ The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

26. First, the Examiner has again reviewed claims 1 and 51 and can not locate the "intelligent agent" so described. As Judge Clevenger has so eloquently summarized these types of arguments, "The invention disclosed in [Applicant's] written description may be outstanding in its field, but the name of the game is the claim." *In re Hiniker Co.*, 150 F.3d 1362, 1369, 47 USPQ2d 1523, 1529 (Fed. Cir. 1998). For this reason alone, Applicants' arguments are not persuasive.

27. Second virtually all electronic commerce systems store a single profile of multiple products. This profile for each product may include information that is *e.g.*, within the products UPC bar code. One of ordinary skill in this art recognizes that UPC bar codes may contain information including but not limited to: date of manufacture; shelf life; place of manufacture; intended distribution route; batch number; government specs; size, weight, color, etc.; safety, health, ingredients, precautions, dosages, etc.; information, pricing, discount, commission, tax, and other accounting information; automatic reordering instructions; serial numbers, and so forth. See *e.g.* Storch et. al. (U.S. 5,548,110). At the very least, electronic commerce systems must store price and an item identifier. This is a profile for that product.

28. Third, if the product is part of a subscription service, it is a product or service that is to be ordered on a recurring basis. And Cockrill directly discloses the use of subscription products and services in electronic commerce systems.

¹³ Applicants' "Remarks," filed December 2, 2004, §III C., Page 18, ~ lines 13-16.

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29. Forth, virtually all subscription products and services are “capable of” being reordered according to a different recurring basis. For examples, newspapers are clearly capable of being reordered on a daily, weekly, or weekend only basis. This functional language is inherent in all subscription products and services since they are “capable of” be reordered. Again, “the absence of a disclosure relating to function does not defeat the Board’s finding of anticipation. *In re Schreiber*, 128 F.3d 1473, 1477, 44 USPQ2d 1429, 1431 (Fed. Cir. 1997). For these reasons alone, Applicants arguments are not persuasive.

Conclusion

30. Applicants’ amendment filed July 19, 2004 necessitated the new grounds of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP §706.07(a). Applicants are reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

31. References considered pertinent to Applicants’ disclosure are listed on the ‘Notice of References Cited’ (form PTO-892) which is provided with this Office Action.

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32. The following two (2) citations to the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure ("MPEP") apply to this Office Action: MPEP citations to Chapters 100, 200, 500, 600, 700, 1000, 1100, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1700, 1800, 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500, 2600, and 2700 are from the MPEP 8th Edition, Rev. 2, May 2004. All remaining MPEP citations are from MPEP 8th Edition, August 2001.

33. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

34. In accordance with *In re Lee*, 277 F.3d 1338, 1344-45, 61 USPQ2d 1430, 1434-35 (Fed. Cir. 2002), the Examiner finds that the references How Computers Work Millennium Ed. by Ron White; How Networks Work, Millennium Ed. by Frank J. Derfler et. al.; and How the Internet Works, Millennium Ed. by Preston Gralla are additional evidence of what is basic knowledge or common sense to one of ordinary skill in this art. Each reference is cited in its entirety. Moreover, because these three references are directed towards beginners (see *e.g.* "User Level Beginning . . ."), because of the references' basic content (which is self-evident upon review of the references), and after further review of the entire application and all the art now of record in conjunction with the factors as discussed in MPEP §2141.03 (where practical), the Examiner finds that these three references are primarily directed towards those of low skill in this art. Because these three references are directed towards

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those of low skill in this art, the Examiner finds that one of ordinary skill in this art must—at the very least—be aware of and understand the knowledge and information contained within these three references.

35. Because this application is now final, Applicants are reminded of the USPTO's after final practice as discussed in MPEP §714.12 and §714.13 and that entry of amendments after final is *not* a matter of right. "The refusal of an examiner to enter an amendment after final rejection of claims is a matter of discretion." *In re Berger*, 279 F.3d 975, 984, 61 USPQ2d 1523, 1529 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (citations omitted). Furthermore, suggestions or examples of claim language provided by the Examiner are just that—suggestions or examples—and do not constitute a formal requirement mandated by the Examiner. Unless stated otherwise by an express indication that a claim is "allowed," exemplary claim language provided by the Examiner to overcome a particular rejection or to change claim interpretation has *not been addressed* with respect to other aspects of patentability (*e.g.* §101 patentable subject matter, §112 1st paragraph written description and enablement, §112 2nd paragraph indefiniteness, and §102 and §103 prior art). Therefore, any claim amendment submitted under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 that incorporates an Examiner suggestion or example or simply changes claim interpretation will nevertheless require further consideration and/or search and a patentability determination as noted above.

36. In accordance with the USPTO's goals of customer service, compact prosecution, and reduction of cycle time, the Examiner has made every effort to clarify his position regarding claim interpretation and any rejections or objections in this application. Furthermore, the Examiner has again provided Applicants with notice—for due process purposes—of his position regarding his factual determinations and legal conclusions. The Examiner notes and

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thanks Applicants for their "Response" (beginning on page 2) traversing the Examiner's positions on various points. If Applicants disagree with any additional factual determination or legal conclusion made by the Examiner in this Office Action whether expressly stated or implied,¹⁴ the Examiner respectfully reminds Applicants to properly traverse the Examiner's position(s) in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) in their next properly filed response. By addressing these issues now, matters where the Examiner and Applicants agree can be eliminated allowing the Examiner and Applicants to focus on areas of disagreement (if any) with the goal towards allowance in the shortest possible time. If Applicants have any questions regarding the Examiner's positions or have other questions regarding this communication or even previous communications, Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Examiner Andrew J. Fischer whose telephone number is (703) 305-0292. If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's immediate supervisor, Robert Olszewski, can be reached at (703) 308-5183. The fax number for facsimile responses is now (703) 872-9306.



Andrew J. Fischer
Primary Examiner
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AJF
December 14, 2004

¹⁴ *E.g.*, if the Examiner rejected a claim under §103 with two references, although not directly stated, it is the Examiner's implied position that the references are analogous art.